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ABSTRACT

Educational guidance services play a key role in implementing educational reform in the Netherlands. There are about 70 state-financed educational service centers that support individual schools by providing such aids as psychological assessments, theoretical and methodological advice, teacher training, guidance, development, and educational innovation. The centers also serve as media centers and information clearinghouses, act as liaisons between schools and the authorities, and provide orientation programs for initiating state-mandated education reforms. The services are confined to primary level schools for ages 4-12. The conclusions of this program review are that teamwork and cooperative development lead to implementation of the reforms and that the national centers effectively support guidance services. (NL)

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Project No. 8

«Innovation in primary education»

Case study on

«SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE»

by

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SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT IN PRACTICE
What can be learned from the Dutch school support system

The concepts of reform and new syllabi, however meticulously worked out by specialists for submission to the teaching profession, are by now realised to have had a negligible effect on everyday school procedure. Following the failure of the R-D-D (Research-Development-Diffusion dissemination) strategy, hopes are currently pinned on school development at the level of the (local) school unit.

Dutch experience in this field already goes back ten years or so. The writer has been commissioned under Council of Europe CDCC Project No. 8 on "Innovation in primary education" to study the organisational design and the operation of the "Educational Guidance Services" ("Onderwijsbegeleidingsdiensten"), reported herein with proposals for the application of the system to other countries.

1. The specific Dutch tradition: national educational policy and independent schools.
2. The key role of the "Onderwijsbegeleidingsdiensten" ("Educational Guidance Services")
3. These services as an instrument of reform in primary education.
4. Differences as regards the design and organisation of educational guidance.
5. Advantages and problems.
6. Transfer to other school systems.

Translated into French by Monica Thurler, University of Geneva.

I wish to thank all the following people for their cordiality, frankness and hospitality in welcoming an "inquisitive foreigner", as I was compelled to be on that occasion, and introducing him to their work. In the order in which I met them, they were:

Alex van Emst of the Algemeen Pedagogisch Studiecentrum (General Educational Research Centre) in Amsterdam, Dook Kopmels of the Regional Pedagogisch Centrum Zeeland (Zeeland Regional Education Centre) in St Laurens, Ton Doeland of H K v Duijvevoorde School in Oost-Souborg, Alie Ekkelkampk Verry Hagen and Adriaan Bax of the Regionale Onderwijsbegeleidingsdienst Eemland (Eemland Regional Guidance Service) in Amersfoort, Gerrit van den Berg of Prins Willem-Alexander School in Nijkerk, Frits van Cruchten and Jan Hochstenbach of the Schoolpedagogisch Centrum Westelijke Mijnstreek in Sittard, and finally Sef Gorissen and Jo Pepels of St Jan School in Stein. I trust that our often animated discussions and the present report will have been both confirmatory and stimulating to them. I myself was able to learn a great many things.

1. THE SPECIFIC DUTCH TRADITION: NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

In order to understand what goes on in Dutch educational policy, one should begin with the actively upheld tradition of religious freedom. A constitutional guarantee of foundation and equal financial opportunities is secured by the state to Catholic, Evangelical and non-denominational local schools alike. Most schools (from primary to university) are denominational. However, the ordinary operating expenses for all schools are borne directly by the state in accordance with the statutory regulations. Consequently, most denominational schools are not private schools in the strict sense but are fully subsidised and accordingly bound to ministerial and parliamentary decisions as well as being under the supervision of the government inspectors.

They nevertheless enjoy considerable autonomy in educational matters. Each school selects its own teachers, establishes a timetable for the compulsory subjects, works out its own syllabus and chooses the teaching procedures. Teachers' in-service training is not mandatory. The local school board, which is a foundation-type governing body, is the sole agency which can make representations, for instance, to an inactive school with a deteriorating standard. Means of enforcement nevertheless remain limited even here, since teachers (in denominational schools as well) have ample protection against dismissal.

The obvious question in this respect is how a public education policy can be pursued in such a situation of organised chaos, and how a consistently acceptable minimum standard of education can be guaranteed and vital innovations and reforms introduced in due time.

The three conventional replies to these points are:

- Fuller use of the legislator's instruments of power, oversight, inspection and funding (eg. publication of compulsory curricula);
- Enhancing the directive effects of "hidden curricula" (eg through standardised selection tests or monopolised production of teaching aids);
- Encouraging competition between schools by establishing financing mechanisms of the kind used by the free market economy (eg "educational credit notes" and relaxing teachers' guarantee against dismissal).

Quite apart from the educational dubiousness of such tactics, impediments to them are inherent in the Dutch (educational) policy system. Admittedly, government controls have become more closely-meshed in recent years, as they have everywhere, and the government has opened debate on the idea of a set of minimum objectives applicable to elementary schools. Yet any further encroachment on school autonomy is very forcefully opposed by traditional cultural liberalism, the churches and the schools themselves. The state has indeed set up its own centralised institutes for the development of evaluation instruments (CILO) and curricula (SLO), but their output remains in the nature of non-compulsory offers (nevertheless readily taken up by many shools), while the production of teaching resources belongs to the free market sector. Parents are of course legally free to choose their children's schools, but experience shows that in most cases the choice is determined by closeness to home and ideological considerations or custom.

The only remaining avenue for the Dutch was a fourth one, ie. not to complain about the intractability of the independent schools or change this through increased government control, but to make a definite appeal for the assumption of individual responsibility by schools and to support them in this.

2. THE KEY ROLE OF THE "ONDERWIJSBEGELEIDINGSDIENSTEN"

These services, which first came into being some 15 years ago, now number about 70 nationwide. They developed partly from school psychology services (for guidance and counselling of children with learning difficulties), and their activity is confined to primary-level schools (ages four to twelve)(1). Their work and general operating conditions will be described in greater detail below.

2.1 General functions of educational guidance services

Educational guidance services have the general function of supporting individual schools in their routine work and fostering their improvement by means of development processes. In addition, it is part of their responsibility to enhance the regional educational infrastructure by acting as media centres and information clearing-houses and by strengthening the liaison network between schools, higher establishments and the authorities. As a rule, schools can call upon their guidance service for the following basic range of assistance;

For pupils	. Psychological diagnoses, educational support, parent consultation, tutoring and therapy;
	. Theoretical and methodological advice to the pupil's teacher.
For teachers	. Advice to individual teachers in difficulties (procedural and disciplinary problems; professional crises);
	. Provision of information on teaching aids, educational resources and specialist literature;
	. Further training in working groups and course groups for the schools network.
For the teaching team	. Methodological advice to grade teams (eg. basic reading instruction, English beginners' course);
	. Advice on group procedure (eg. conduct of dialogue and decision-making in staff meetings; internal organisation of co-operation within the school);
	. Further training for school directors;
	. Supervision of major innovations (eg reform of environmental studies, systematic personalisation);
	. Guidance in curriculum design and the development of teaching aids.

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(1) When I asked the reasons for this illogical limitation, hardly conducive moreover to vertical continuity in school development, the answer was invariably a shrug of the shoulders. It would appear that, among other reasons, the academic prestige of secondary teachers opposes the demand for guidance (!?).

The form of activities is determined first and foremost by schools' statements of their situational needs, while there are also offers of assistance determined either by the "in-house educational philosophy" of the guidance service or by innovatory programmes at national level. Thus the subject of co-operation between a school and the guidance service is not infrequently the outcome of interaction between the school's problems and the concerns of the service or of the consultant assigned to deal with them.

2.2 Status and organisation

Educational guidance services have the legal status of foundations and with few exceptions (5 out of 70) have no denominational bias. They originate from municipal or district initiatives, and each one serves at least 15,000 pupils. They are state-financed at a uniform rate of 48 HFL per pupil, and additional contribution of similar size being expected of the local s ool authorities. Since this contribution is no longer prescribed by law, there are significant budgetary differences between individual services.

Depending on the pupil population of the region concerned and the size of grants, the staff of the services ranges from a dozen to several dozen. On average, each consultant is responsible for four primary schools.

The services are answerable to a supervisory board composed of representatives of the chief school authorities (municipalities, church school authorities) and of teachers' associations. In addition, there are often advisory groups consisting of representatives of the primary schools, the schools fed by them and other institutions.

The services are headed by a director, who is sometimes assisted by a managerial staff. Depending on the internal organisation (see section 4), there is an intermediate structure of administrators, sub-centres, co-ordinators, team leaders etc. The specialist staff consists of professional "orthopedagoogen" (remedial education specialists and school psychologists) and consultants in educational theory and practice. The latter are mainly former teachers having obtained further qualifications in education through courses or tertiary studies. There are also technical and office staff. The frequency of staff meetings, co-ordination group sessions and in-house training courses depends on the size, structure and principles of the service.

2.3 National back-up education services

Each school guidance service has links with one of the three main "National Centres", viz the APS (Algemeen Pedagogisch Studiecentrum), the CPS (Christelijk Pedagogisch Studiecentrum) or the KPC (Katholiek Pedagogisch Centrum). Each is government-financed, supervised by the Ministry of Education, develops concepts and innovation programmes with the necessary implementation instruments, provides ministerial advisers, conducts educational experiments and pilot projects and directly assists the associated guidance services through counselling and specialist training. When a nationwide innovation programme is to be launched, the permanent co-ordination group assigns the project management (secretariat) to one of the three centres on a rota basis, and forms a joint project group.

Innovation programmes (under the "intensive strategy") are usually developed in conjunction with pilot zones, ie. districts where there is no guidance service as yet and where the Education Centre assumes this function, or with one or two selected guidance services and the schools which they serve.

The Education Centres act either on the direct instructions of the Ministry, or in response to requests from guidance services, schools and higher education institutes or they initiate projects on their own responsibliity. The APS, for instance, aims at a breakdown of the above activities in the ratio 40 : 40 : 20%. Their internal organisation is according to levels of education; the primary-level section comprises about 25 staff and the secondary-level section has a larger establishment of about 60 people because there are no corresponding regional guidance services.

In addition to the three National Education Centres (LPCs), there are three other central institutes dealing with the field of educational development: a National Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO), a National Institute of Educational Research (SVO) and a National Institute for the Development of Tests (CITO). As initially conceived, the SVO, SLO and LPCs were interrelated according ot the conventional R-D-D (Research, Development, Diffusion) innovation strategy. The SVO was supposed to conduct research (of a preparatory and evaluative nature), on the basis of which the SLO subsequently developed the practical programmes (curricula and educational resources), after which the three LPCs were to ensure the dissemination of the innovation programme. This allocation of tasks still applies to the outline planning of nationwide innovation campaigns, but the National Education Centres are tending towards increasing integration of research, development and implementation work.

The CITO is somewhat dissociated from the R-D-D sequence. It deals with the preparation of pupil performance tests, eg. for promotion to secondary level. Although schools are not compelled to adopt these tests, they are very frequently applied and therefore serve an important function in connection with the "hidden curriculum".

2.4 Example of a "guidance offer": the Zeeland Regional Education Centre RPCZ

This case in point is not positively representative: the Zeeland centre has the reputation of individualism, high professionalism and somewhat radical application of the "intensive strategy" (see above) by virtue of its ideology. I have singled it out because it presents a full spectrum of services and has a structure and working method very closely approximating the ultimate in educational guidance.

Zeeland is a province in the south-western Netherlands with some 30 municipalities and over 200 primary schools. The RPCZ (Director: Dook Kopmels) was founded in 1970 and expanded in 1974. At present it numbers some 70 staff members divided among the central administrative department in St Laurens and the three branches in Goes, Middelburg and Ternenzen. Ten or so are actually school psychologists or remedial education specialists while the majority are consultants. With few exceptions (strict Calvinist or Rudolf Steiner schools), all schools have contractual links with the Centre.

Services available

The Centre's services cater for all aspects of school life and for every type of person and group (pupils, teachers, parents and authorities). The assistance offered covers a wide variety of matters, for example:

- educational content (curriculum reform)
- co-operation among teachers
- methodological questions (eg. personalised teaching)
- home-school contacts
- selection of teaching aids
- school organisation
- dealing with problem children
- classroom organisation and procedure.

Working method

The RPCZ offers various forms of support, for example:

- conferences with the school administration
- pupil case-studies
- individual or group interviews with teachers
- classroom observation
- interviews with parents
- arrangement of a parent-teacher evening in conjunction with the local parents' council
- organisation of in-service teacher training.

Work is systematically geared to assistance and problem-solving and is carried out solely at the school's request and in permanent consultation with it, at no cost to the school thanks to financing by the government and the local school authorities.

Consultations may vary in length from short missions to extended processes (yearly curriculum supervision).

Internal organisation

The various decentralised teams have a specific make-up, namely a co-ordinator, several consultants, a general psychologist, an educational psychologist, a remedial teaching specialist, psychological assistants and a secretariat. It can be reinforced as required by the central "support group" or by enlisting outside specialists. Intervention in schools is carried out according to the task and the Centre's capabilities by individual staff members or composite teams. The central "support group" is the nerve-centre of the RPCZ, consisting of specialists in educational innovation and carrying out planning, internal supervision of staff and systematic further training for them.

Special services

In addition to its routine services, the RPCZ offers a few special services:

- trouble-shooting in difficult school situations (reserved for the management)
- teacher training by the Gordon method
- school integration of ethnic minorities (plans for a special data bank)
- advice to school authorities, parents' associations, parents' councils and other bodies concerned with education
- co-ordination of support to "mini-schools" (very small primary schools in Zeeland)
- psychological and remedial assistance for pupils with particular learning difficulties, behavioural disorders or mental and/or physical handicaps attending special schools and vocational training.

Principles of consultation

The RPCZ plainly devotes some effort to developing principles of support and consultation shared by its staff, some of which I gathered, albeit sketchily, from conversations and documents:

. Action is only taken on the spontaneous initiative of the school. The problem stated by the school is dealt with seriously, even if it may be patently superficial.

. Schools are nevertheless encouraged to undertake reform processes, never insistently but rather through discreet offers, teaching aids produced at the centre and supplied free of charge, documentary material and further training courses (also available to individual teachers).

. The language of documents/materials must be plain, matter-of-fact and expressive.

. It is worthwhile before commencing an intervention to thrash out problems and needs and to settle mutual expectations and terms of co-operation.

. The vital first step in working with a team of teachers is to dispel the "no problems" dogma and to accept and learn to understand one another as people with weaknesses and problems.

. Long-term aims and guiding concepts are helpful in getting over slack periods and low points in a project. It should be acknowledged as normal that schools slacken their pace from time to time and are not unremittingly involved in a hectic, demanding, intensive innovation process.

3. EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES AS AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL REFORM IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

A grassroots, decentralised style of school development assisted by educational guidance services may irritate proponents of national school co-ordination as causing undue local profusion and precluding centralised innovation schemes. However, as the following example shows, the dense educational support network offers excellent possibilities for nationwide reform projects.

In 1985, Parliament passed a new Primary Education Act applying to what are called "Basisschools". The main purposes of the Act are as follows:

a) Amalgamation of the hitherto separately located and administered nursery schools and primary schools in an integrated primary school for pupils aged 4 to 12.

b) Reorganisation of subject areas (including earlier English teaching).

c) More individual attention, especially to pupils with learning difficulties.

In order to introduce and implement the Act, a project group comprising representatives of all three National Education Centres (4 for the APS, 2 for the KPC and 2 for the CPS) was formed. The APS was entrusted with the secretariat.

3.1 Three-stage innovation programme

The innovation process as a whole was divided into three phases:

1. Adoption	2. Implementation	3. Incorporation
From 1987, preparation of schools, voluntary reorganisation adaptation	1986 - 1990 systematic "introduction programmes" taking in about 2,000 schools per year	Consolidation (not yet planned)

As early as the adoption phase, 70% of schools already switched to the new structure prescribed by the Act. Many took advantage of the offer to conduct an open conversion process lasting a year in conjunction with an educational guidance service in order to adapt to the innovation techniques prescribed in phase 2 (planned work with a consultant).

The rapporteur finds such a protracted phase of adaptation and preparation for the actual reform thoroughly original and sensible. It avoids confronting schools abruptly with a fait accompli and thereby over-taxing them or arousing their opposition.

3.2 Implementation phase and "initiation programmes"

The 1985 Primary Education Act comprises 13 specific areas or educational objectives requiring schools to make curriculum adjustments and corresponding teaching reforms. Three or four "initiation programmes" (Invoeringsprogramma's) were or are being developed for each area. They consist of educational resources in brochure form, comprehensive theoretical and methodological explanations and background information, learning goals, teaching principles, practical examples, pupils' resources and testing instruments. Through alternative versions, an effort is made to give schools a real choice and to cater for different school situations (eg. basic reading programmes for each year and for multiple-grade schools).

The programmes are commissioned by the project group, under the guidance of the APS, from recognised authors who are given 20 days or longer to develop them, according to the degree of novelty or difficulty. They are generally developed and tested in conjunction with selected schools under the "intensive strategy" before being transferred to the educational guidance services for application under an "extensive strategy".

The guidance services familiarise schools (eg. by orientation sessions run along market lines or by prospectus) with the available programmes for initiating the reforms, whereupon the schools settle for a programme with the year of intensive support to which they are entitled. During this year they can release a teacher for half a day per week as a contact between the school and its adviser, and receive a small subsidy of 300 HFL.

In practice there are occasional departures from this basic pattern; the free and scrupulous choice of a programme is currently restricted by their limited range, which is nevertheless being progressively expanded. Thus schools may decide to choose a topic which does not necessarily correspond to the most urgent concerns but, considering the limited range of programmes, appears the most suitable. On the other hand, a school may want to keep working with its familiar and valued consultant and so will choose the topic which suits him best. Then again, the available range may offer nothing satisfactory and a "made-to measure" initiation programme is worked out in conjunction with the educational guidance service. Such divergences are not however, disapproved of by the people in charge, but wholeheartedly accepted or even welcomed in that that paramount concern in the implementation of such a programme is to make an exemplary start with a long-term development process rendering schools technically capable, after a year of intensive guidance, of pursuing the process for the attainment of the reform objectives prescribed by the act.

3.3 Methodology used in implementing an initiation programme

The consultants have "scripts" (draaiboek) describing a possible procedure in great detail. The following standard sequence is prescribed:

Step 1: Helping the school to select a suitable initiation programme.

Step 2: Preparing in conjunction with the school a reform plan, ie. a working schedule for the forthcoming year (definition of objectives, selection of resources, possible adaptation of programme materials etc.).

Step 3: Establishing a guidance plan which features the consultant's role, appraisal of the school's original situation, reform potential and expected difficulties, required action by the consultant or group of consultants, etc.

Step 4: Conduct of the innovation programme (about 8-10 months).

Step 5: Evaluation of the results, which are incorporated into the school syllabus.

The consultants attend courses for training in the use of the "scripts" and the various planning, diagnosis, evaluation and working instruments. As far as the rapporteur could see, the instruments are generally employed very much by the book , though in some cases very freely or even using individual procedures and instruments. As one example, the diagnostic instrument developed by Alex van Emst (innoverend Handelen. Amsterdam /APS/ 1985) in conjunction with some 150 consultants for the analysis of a school's potential for change is supposed to be applied solely by the consultant and kept under lock and key, according to the instructions. The reasons are plain: the four-dimensional evaluation instrument comprises confidential particulars of a school concerning readiness for reform. the teaching staff's attitude to teamwork, typical subjects of staff-room conversation and the school's way of dealing with problems and conflicts. The result of the evaluation can never be objective and in most cases would be liable to cause arguments, contradiction or even considerable offence to self-esteem among the teaching staff. Nevertheless, the rapport came across one school whose good relationship with the consultant allowed the evaluation, albeit far from complimentary, to be made public!

3.4 Discussion of diagnostic instruments

These instruments are indeed widely disseminated and accepted, but do not go unchallenged in certain guidance services. The approach through fault-finding which these instruments entail is considered highly questionable from the motivation angle. The RPCZ, for instance, takes the view that it would be more profitable to follow a consistent reinforcement approach by identifying and enhancing the school's strong points and positive procedures, instead of the shortcomings. If so, the weaknesses would come right with time or lose in significance.

Admittedly it has not yet been feasible to reconcile the two approaches, although this seems quite possible and meaningful; appraisal of the discrepancies between real and ideal in setting innovation goals and procedures, or evaluation of the co-operation standard achieved by a teaching team, can be perfectly useful or even indispensable as a way of avoiding undue demands on all concerned through over-ambitious requirements and forestalling frustration and defection. Furthermore, the standards inherent in all diagnostic instruments are not to be adopted uncritically. Not every innovation goal prescribed by some foreordained diagnostic criterion is a worthwhile, meaningful objective guaranteeing success for particular schools. As well as using diagnostic instruments helpfully and objectively, there should always be an independent discussion of innovation goals. It is also advisable from the angle of innovation technique that the eventual goal-setting should be carried out according to the principle of bolstering any constructive, promising initiatives which the school may already have taken. An extreme "reinforcement" approach nevertheless comes under suspicion of indulging in technocratic opportunism which will all too readily evade the awkward and perhaps disagreeable educational requirements of pupils and/or society.

4. VARIATIONS IN THE CONCEPTION AND ORGANISATION OF EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Interviews with directors and staff of the three guidance services in Amersfoort (Eemland), Sittard (Westlijke Mijnstreek) and Zeeland revealed considerable concordance (see section 2 in particular) but also some current variations and dilemmas, some of which were mentioned in the preceding sections. These should be clarified for the benefit of further discussion of the idea of guided local school development and its transfer to other school systems.

4.1 Innovation or assistance in problem-solving?

Using the guidance services to implement the new Primary Education Act is fully consistent with many services' professed desire for their educational development work to include purposive support of innovations or educational precepts. The offers of consultation and course are similarly intended as a meaningful and necessary way of spurring schools in the direction of explicit innovation goals which are educationally and socially justified.

Conversely, other guidance services follow an approach based on requirements, acting not on their own initiative but in response to the needs declared by schools. The stated guidance needs are taken in hand and dealt with so as to assist in clarifying and solving the relevant problem. Educational precepts (stemming from the government, the guidance services or the consultant) are neither repressed nor promoted but, in the same way as the problems and educational principles of the school and the teachers, are elements in the ensuing process of clarification, negotiation and problem-solving.

Of course, the two operational principles seldom or never occur in isolation but rather in combination (like most of the typologies which are to follow). On the other hand, a predominant tendency in one direction or the other can be distinguished in every guidance service.

4.2 Consultants or teams of consultants?

The rapporteur encountered three basic patterns:

- Each school normally has one consultant, who brings in other colleagues in special cases.
- The schools of a sub-region (rayon) are as a rule assigned to a team of consultants which provides each school with one or more consultants as required.
- There is no hard and fast rule. Each call for assistance from a school is analysed case by case and then assigned either to an individual consultant or to a team.

The advantages and disadvantages of the above patterns are obvious, and it is by weighing them up in relation to the guidance service's own ideology, and/or by taking geographical and financial factors into consideration, that a pattern is chosen.

4.3 A stable or variable relationship with the consultant?

Irrespective of whether individual or team guidance is applied, there are differences as regards the stability of the relationship between the school and the consultant. This also presents three basic patterns:

- "Family doctor" pattern: A long-standing, stable relationship relying on trust, continuity and thorough knowledge of the school. It is accepted that hte consultant cannot be fully expert in every problem which arises. In exceptional cases, other specialist advisers are called in.
- "Task force" pattern: In principle, solely fixed-term, project-specific guidance agreements are entered into with consultants or teams of them according to their qualifications for the job in hand.
- "Matrix" organisation: Each school has a long-term, stable relationship with a consultant for the general conduct of the innovation process, but constant use is also made of consultants (teams) specialising in given subjects (eg. introductory reading course, new maths, differentiation of teaching, etc.).

The conflict apparent here between, on the one hand, trust and continuity and, on the other hand, tailor-made expertise in the relevant problem, can be variously settled in good faith. A satisfactory solution in a mdeium to long-term development perspective is for the school administration or teaching staff to acquire the independent capacity for continuous control and optimisation of the development process, so that the school manages very well by temporarily engaging consultants qualified to deal with a particular problem.

4.4 Ideological profile or guidance services

A longer and closer involvement in the guidance services visited would have been necessary to definitely state the prevailing ideology of each unit. Conversations with staff and outsiders nevertheless made it plain that each service attaches varying importance to upholding a "philosophy of innovation and guidance" common to all consultants. The rapporteur finds such an idoelogy, ie. agreement on a few essential educational principles and conceptions of school and its development, important as regards the service's impact in the region, flexible deployment of staff, further training and professional advancement of consultants, and not least staff motivation and solidarity.

The differing intensity of the effort devoted to an ideology of this kind appear traceable to the size of the undertaking, the staff deployment model (permanent assignment to schools or ad hoc task forces), financial resources for in-house colloquies and further training, and the varying image of leadership conveyed by the directors and senior executives.

4.5 Autonomy versus conformity to national standards and institutions

The more or less pronounces "service spirit" described above also appears to influence a guidance service's relationship with its National Education Centre (APS, KPC or CPS). Indeed, the centres provide the guidance services not only with resources (teaching programmes, procedural outlines etc.) but also with organisational advice and staff training. From conversations with representatives of the three guidance services and with the APS representative, differing relations with the parent institute could be discerned: Sittard, as a "testing ground" (pilot area carrying on intensive exchange with the APS) seems to have a closer relationship with the APS than

does the much larger concern in Amersfoord which, though strongly influenced by the APS from the instrumental point of view, has rather a limited and technical relationship with it. By contrast, the Zeeland centre is friendly and co-operative but very self-assured, claiming virtual sovereignty in its territory.

Owing to the rapporteur's unavoidably superficial preception, it is neither possible nor expedient to attempt an interpretation, let alone an appraisal, of the foregoing. What is suprising and impressive, however, is the composure and flexibility with which the APS apparently tolerates, and what is more productively exploits, these contrasting relations.

4.6 Relationship between schools at regional level

Among the duties of an educational guidance services is the task, already described in sub-section 2.1 of developing and intensifying the educational network and infrastructure in the region which it serves. Considering the denominational breakdown of the educational system and the government grant procedure, which does not always favour co-operation, this is no easy task. In many places it has not been possible to establish co-operation with the teacher training colleges, as the bodies responsible for in-service teacher training, with school development as a common goal. Even where in-service training programmes have been drafted jointly, it has not been possible to achieve true co-ordination. Naturally there are also exceptions to the rule, as for example in Sittard where the director of the teacher training college played a decisive part in the foundation of the educational guidance service.

The rapporteur was unable to establish to what extent, irrespective of historical and structural constraints and interests, the political psychology know-how of officials might be influencing the contrasts in the direction of successful "networking". Be that as it may, it would definitely be most useful to devote part of the training for senior staff in the guidance services to familiarising them with "social strategies" (ability to be effective advocates of basic educational methods and principles).

4.7 Budgetary allocations

Funding (and consequently establishment and infrastructure) differ widely as between the various educational guidance services. Although the basic ministerial grant on 48 HFL per pupil is the same for all services, contributions by local school authorities can vary considerably. Whereas municipal grants far exceed the reference figure of 48 HFL where Amersfoort is concerned, Sittard and Zeeland must get by on a budget well below this level. It is hard to determine how much of an adverse effect (regarding the quality of work) these limitations actually have, whether they are utterly unimportant or whether they enhance the enterprise and creativity of the people concerned.

5. ADVANTAGES AND PROBLEMS

It is difficult for the rapporteur to sum up at this point his impressions of the advantages and difficulties of the Dutch educational guidance services system as a vehicle for school development. A fair and accurate judgment would have required a far longer stay. The folloiwng list of points therefore does not claim to be objective or valid. Another observer would certainly have asked other questions, made other appraisals and picked up the main points in the statements of his interlocutors in a different way. The reader should make due allowance for these reservations.

5.1 Strong points

On the whole, it can be taken that the rapporteur was most impressed and occasionally inspired by the system and its effects. He found that the Netherlands had to a large extent achieved what he and some of his colleagues in Switzerland have only begun to construct. Specifically, the following were the strongest impressions:

- In many places a proper balance has effectively been struck between support to individual teachers in their calsswork and the organisational development of the school as a whole or ofthe teaching team.

- Apparently just as successful in most cases, is the balance between need for reform and stated requirements as the starting-point for innovative action. Innovation programmes concocted higher up (eg. in the ministry) are not forced on schools, nor is a school's momentary and subjective need to have a problem solved the inevitable basis for innovation. There is clearly a strong inclination not only to deal helpfully with the pressure of current problems on a school but also to take the opposing line by following the government's educational guidelines and demands for innovation in respect of schools (as far as is allowed by established school autonomy).

  The rapporteur was most impressed by the fact that after only a few years of guidance experience, team-work and co-operative development had become very much a matter of course, making for the smooth implementation of reforms which in other countries would lead to widespread controversy and the sensationalism of ambitious educational experiments.

  Also impressive was the way in which problems and conflicts are discussed by teaching staff. A school director described this as "a cordial approach to problems", with the words "Today we can quite urbanely tell each other things which would once have made people slam the door. We have learned to regard conflicts as problems which we can learn to solve with due regard to individual integrity, as natural daily occurrences ".

- Lastly, attention should be drawn to the very high professional standard of most educational consultants, as indicated by the generally high ability to discuss school development processes and be objective about procedures, successes and difficulties, and also the use of elaborate diagnosis and planning instruments in day-to-day work.

The three national education centres appear to be supporting the guidance services most effectively, in particular through the further training of consultants and the provision of working instruments.

5.2 Difficulties

The problems referred to below were ascertained not so much from direct observation as from statements by senior personnel (APS representatives, guidance service directors and staff).

- The school development infrastructure for applying innovations at national level, which as already mentioned, stems from the tradition of the R-D-D approach used in the sixties, may soon become unworkable unless it adapts to the realities which have emerged since then and to the altered conception of innovation. Today, innovative concepts and resources are no longer developed solely by the National Institute of Curriculum Development (SLO) but also by the national education centres (originally conceived as mere clearing-houses) and by the guidance services themselves. The same applies to the National Institute of Educational REsearch (SVO) in so far as applied research is becoming increasingly incorporated into the tasks of the education centres and guidance services. Their institutional proximity may well lead to undue friction, time-wasting and de-motivation of all concerned, particularly the field workers. A reapportionment of tasks will probably be unavoidable.

- In an integrated conception of school development, the detachment of traditional teacher in-service training is striking. It is provided by the teacher training colleges, which often (perhaps out of fear for self-preservation) show little interest in co-operating in the development and further training activity of the education centres and guidance services. A formal attempt to tie up in-service training with the primary school innovation project was just as formally halted. This is not only regrettable as regards the impact of the project but also raises the question how far the standoffishness of the training institutes might influence the socialisation of future teachers.

- The rapporteur gained the general impression that there is too much institutional exclusion and not enough non-bureaucratic interlinking of institutions. To justify this, only the following suppositions can be stated:

  - Are the demarcations of the functions of institutions too rigidly defined by law?
  - Is the government grant policy so designed as to encourage institutional self-interest rather than co-operation?
  - Are the guidance staff ill-trained in "networking" or in the use of social strategies in the institutional and political context?

. A number of guidance services still do not seem to have invested heavily enough in the development of a common in-house doctrine, in their own school development ideology. Where they remain to a large extent no more than administrative groupings of individual consultants, opportunities for teamwork geared to problems are forfeited and the question ultimately arises whether a consultant can credibly preach team development and a co-operative school atmosphere without practising it in his own job.

. The centrally devised "initiation programmes" for primary school innovation are partly appreciated and partly rejected. It is interesting to note the replies made to the rapporteur's questions about what typifies unsuitable programmes. The following deficiencies were mentioned:

- too abstract and theoretical, not enough clear and practical examples;
- content unacceptable from the angle of the educational and psychological approach advocated;
- subsequent costs too exorbitant (purchase of new equipment, etc);
- requires an introductory period taking too much time (over a year) and supervision.

. A current problem remains the narrow choice of initiation programmes, with the frequent effect that schools cannot select programmes suiting them and instead the project must find schools suiting the programme. The development of new programmes or versions thereof is nevertheless in full swing so that these straits can be overcome before the official doctrine of "school tailoring" loses too much credibility.

. Lastly, it is regrettable that the entire educational guidance system is restricted to primary level. This causes problems of continuity in pupils' transition from primary to secondary school, and may extinguish some of the abilities and attitudes developed in pupils through innovation programmes at primary level.

6. TRANSFER TO OTHER SCHOOL SYSTEMS

An easily transferable conception and guiding principle of educational policy is the basic idea that teaching teams, in addition to schools and individual teachers, are to be regarded as units in the innovation process. The development of schools requires the support of professional consultants.

However, the Dutch manner of applying this basic idea is not so easy to imitate. The private school type autonomy of all schools plus a high degree of government funding offers the Dutch favourable initial conditions founded in history, which are lacking in most other European states. The majority (including federal systems as in the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland) have a comparatively centralised educational system which co-ordinates schools by means of detailed syllabi, prescribed aids, standardised selection tests (as from the end of primary school) and other regulations. The introduction of innovations is correspondingly subject to more constraints as regards time-limits and content, often not aimed at individual schools but rather with individual teachers as the target or as the sole executors of the innovation.

In these circumstances it is not easy to put consistently into practice the Dutch idea of school development geared to the school itself. The rapporteur would therefore submit elements which in his belief could be progressively implemented in part or in combination by all states.

Persuasion

Spreading the idea of "grassroots" school development among educational policy makers and authorities; publicising the findings of school development research and successful pilot schemes; convincing teachers' associations that active teaching teams represent the nucleus of what constitutes an active association.

Stimulation of schools

Even in (still) centrally structured education, it is possible to stimulate the school more as the scene of co-operation and educational development, by the following means:

- Addressing schools directly (and not only local authorities or teachers, for instance) in consultations, hearings etc; adoption of a consultative style of management by the school authorities (municipalities, districts, etc.).
- Further training of school directors as regards team leadership, creation of a school atmosphere and innovation techniques.
- Part of the unallocated space in the teaching programme, whether existing or to be created, should not be left to individual teachers but defined as an area of decision for the school or the team as a whole.

Offer of alternative control methods

Allaying the fears of the school authorities that increased school autonomy may lead to uncontrollable growth, lower the standard of individual schools and impair equal rights and opportunities. As a substitute for the concentration of precautionary regulations which is to be eliminated, other possibilities of control should be offered:

- Reinforcement of the inspectorate, eg. by training inspectors for quality assessment of schools;
- Instead of imposing regulations from above schools should be urged to formulate the necessary rules themselves (curricula, teaching aids etc.) and subsequently submit them to the school authorities for approval in accordance with general criteria.

Formation and support of guidance structures

A network of consultants, initially operating outside their strictly official functions, to be gradually built up; people with experience of in-service training within schools or assistance with school experiments to be supported and further trained (eg. in supervised groups); new staff to be offered fields where they can gain experience.

Expanding existing decentralised educational services	School psychology services, teacher' centres and training colleges to be given a broader understanding of their tasks.
Fostering pilot experiments	New programmes (syllabi, teaching aids etc.) to be introduced on a single school basis as models: Single school aspect: Not in centralised in-service training courses but rather through six-month or twelve-month school teaching team activities; Model aspect: The process of introducing innovations and developing them as a team effort is at least as important as the actual innovations. The staff should thus be motivated and qualified to implement future innovations according to the same approach.
Use of proven diagnosis and planning instruments	Specialists in Holland (and no doubt elsewhere) have developed well-tried diagnosis and planning instruments (standard contracts, team situation analysis, discussion of aims, assessment etc) for routine educational guidance and teamwork. It would be useful to translate these and make them generally accessible (eg. at a seminar). For instance, I consider the multidimensional instrument developed by Alex van Emst for analysing a school's capacity for change and for teamwork to be eminently usable and well worth disseminating.

In conclusion, it is to be hoped that international exchange of experience in this recent field of local school development will be pursued. There is a great deal to be learned from it; at least that was my impression after three worthwhile days in the Netherlands.